



11

SEP 95

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ROBINSON

HARRIS

YOUNG

STARMAN



HARRIS
1-9-9-5



IT COULD HAVE BEEN ANY SUMMER IN THE OPAL. IF A MANIAC HADN'T DECIDED IT WAS HIS YEAR TO BECOME A MANIAC.

IF HE HADN'T A HORDE; EAGER AND WILLING AND AWAITING THE WORD TO ACT AS SAVAGELY INSANE AS THEIR LEADER.

AND BECAUSE OF THIS...

...THE YEAR WAS UNLIKE ANY I CAN RECALL.

I WAS AWAY AT THAT TIME.

FIRSTLY WHEN MY ROOKIE'S ITCH NEEDED SCRATCHING AND I WENT FORTH FOR SOME SPORT. TWICE THEN BARRY ALLEN AND I MET IN SKIRMISHES. HE BEAT ME SQUARELY AND SOUNDLY ONE OF THOSE TIMES, TOO.

THOUGH I LET HIM WIN THE OTHER.



AND THEN I PLAYED HERO FOR A WEEK. KENT NELSON, HE OF THE YELLOW AND BLUE AND MAGICAL WAYS, HAD NEED OF ME... MY SINGULAR TALENTS.

AH, BUT THAT'S ANOTHER TALE FOR ANOTHER TIME. AND NOT OF OPAL. IN THE CITY THAT SUMMER... AN ACID, STINGING SUMMER AT THAT, THINGS WERE...

...MALEVOLENT, UMBRAGEOUS, DRASTIC...

...AND QUITE,
QUITE BLOODY.

THE RAGDOLL HAD
BEEN A THIRD-RATE
VILLAIN. AT HIS FINEST
HE'D BEEN LITTLE MORE
THAN AN ANNOYANCE
TO JAY GARRICK AND
OTHERS. AN EX-CARNY
PETTY THIEF IN A
SILLY SUIT.

JAIL WAS HIS HOME MAINLY (THOUGH FROM WHAT
I'VE HEARD, HE FARED NO BETTER THERE THAN HE
DID ON THE STREET).

BY THE YEAR EVERYTHING CAME TO PASS...
RAGDOLL HAD GROWN OLD. IT HAD BEEN A
SAD, SLOPPY LIFE FOR HIM AND HE KNEW IT.
HIS HAIR WAS GRAY, AND THE TRIPLE-JOINTED
TUMBLING POWER HE HAD, NOW CAUSED HIS
LIMBS GREAT PAIN.

HIS LIFE WAS A
FAILURE.

BUT IT WAS THEN HE DISCOVERED HE
HAD A GIFT OF FAR MORE EFFECT THAN
PHYSICAL DEXTERITY. HE'D NEVER THOUGHT
HIMSELF MUCH A SPEECHMAKER, BUT HIS
FATHER HAD BEEN A SIDE-SHOW BARKER,
SO PERHAPS IT WAS A GIFT OF BIRTH HE
NEVER KNEW HE HAD.

RAGDOLL BEGAN TALKING.
SPEAKING. OFFERING THE LOST
AND THE LONELY A LEADER,
AND A DIRECTION TO TAKE THEIR
EMPTY LIVES. AND THOSE
LONELY PEOPLE LISTENED.

CULTS ARE TEN A PENNY IN
THIS COUNTRY. IT TAKES
DEATH, AND THE MEDIA DEATH
BRINGS, FOR A CULT TO GAIN
EVEN A GLIMMER OF
ATTENTION.

THE RAGDOLL CULT BROUGHT
MURDER TO OPAL CITY.
INDEED, TO SUCH DEGREE
THAT THEIR "GLIMMER" OF
NOTICE SOON FLARED INTO
A BEACON.

A BEACON
BRIGHT.

THE POLICE WERE POWERLESS.
A FOLLOWER OR TWO WOULD BE
CAUGHT, BUT THERE WERE
ALWAYS MORE.

THE
RANDOMNESS
OF THE VIOLENT
ACTS THEY
PERPETRATED
DIDN'T HELP
MATTERS.

CRIME WITHOUT LOGIC
OR PATTERN IS HARD
TO CIRCUMVENT.

THE CITY PRAYED.
TO GOD. AND TO
THEIR HERO.

"HOW LONG BEFORE
STARMAN BRINGS THIS
MADNESS TO AN END.
HE MUST, HE IS OUR
PROTECTOR AND SO
HE MUST. HE WILL. AND
SOON, IT MUST BE SOON,
BEFORE THE CITY
DROWNS IN THE BLOOD
OF ITS CITIZENS."

"STARMAN WILL STOP
THE KILLING. HE WILL,
HE MUST."

"BUT WHEN?"

FOR THE SAKE OF HIS
CITY, HE'D SWALLOWED
HIS PRIDE.

AND HE'D PICKED
UP THE PHONE.

AND MADE SOME CALLS.

THANK YOU
FOR BEING
HERE.
ALL OF
YOU.

TED, TED, WE'RE YOUR
FRIENDS. THAT'S ALL
THERE IS TO IT.

YOU NEED
US...

...YOU CALL US...

IT WAS TOO MUCH OF A TASK
FOR ONE MAN. EVEN ONE ARMED
WITH THE POWER OF GUNS.

LUCKILY TED KNIGHT HAD
REALIZED THIS. NO ONE KNEW
IT AT THE TIME, OF COURSE, BUT
TED HAD BEEN A TRUE HERO
THEN.

13 : FIVE YEARS : FRIENDS AGO

A TALE OF TIMES PAST

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...WE
COME.





WELL, THERE ARE **THREE PROBLEMS** AS I SEE IT.

THERE ARE THE **KIDNAPPED TWINS**. TWO GIRLS, TWO YEARS OLD. THEY'RE THE CHILDREN OF **SAMUEL SILBERT**... SAM IS ONE OF OPAL'S **LEADING BANKERS**. HE HAS TO **OPEN THE BANK VAULTS** TO **RAGDOLL** BY **TOMORROW** OR THE CHILDREN DIE. SAM WAS TOLD THAT THEY'D **ALSO DIE** IF HE WENT TO THE **POLICE**.



SO HE CAME TO ME.



AND THEN THERE'S **GRAIL**. IT'S A **RETIREMENT COMMUNITY**, FOR **VETERANS** AND **SUCH**. IT'S OFF TO THE **SIDE OF THE CITY**, IN A **VALLEY BUILT INTO THE ROCKS** JUST **SOUTH OF HERE**.

THE **RAGDOLL'S MINIONS** INTEND TO **MARCH ON IT** **TONIGHT**. A **LARGE GROUP** OF THEM.



TO WHAT END?

KILLING? RANSACKING? **PERHAPS** THEY THINK THEY CAN TAKE THE **WHOLE AREA** **HOSTAGE**.

WHAT ARE THE **POLICE** DOING ABOUT IT?



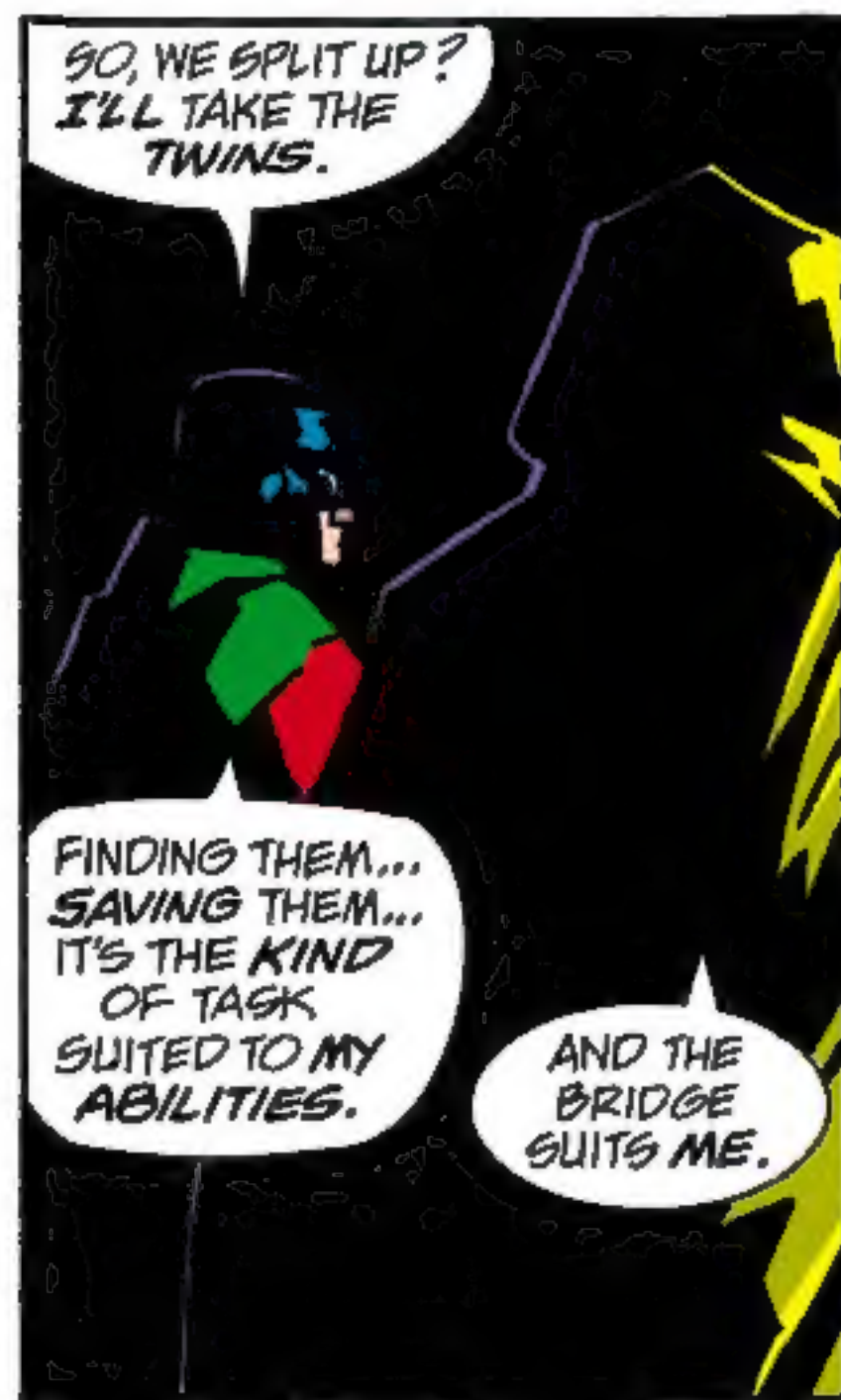
THERE IS **MUCH** HAPPENING IN THE **CITY** **THIS NIGHT**... **EVERY NIGHT** **THIS PAST MONTH**. **ROBBERIES**, **ASSAULTS**, AND **MANY DEATHS**. THE **POLICE** ARE **STRETCHED THIN**.

THE **GRAIL** HAS A **GUARD**, BUT IT'S A **LIGHT ONE**.



HOWEVER... THE **GRAIL** IS ONLY ACCESSIBLE BY CROSSING A **LARGE BRIDGE**.

AND **BRIDGES** CAN BE **HELD**.



SO, WE **SPLIT UP**? I'LL TAKE THE **TWINS**.

FINDING THEM... **SAVING THEM**... IT'S THE **KIND OF TASK** SUITED TO MY **ABILITIES**.

AND THE **BRIDGE** SUITS ME.



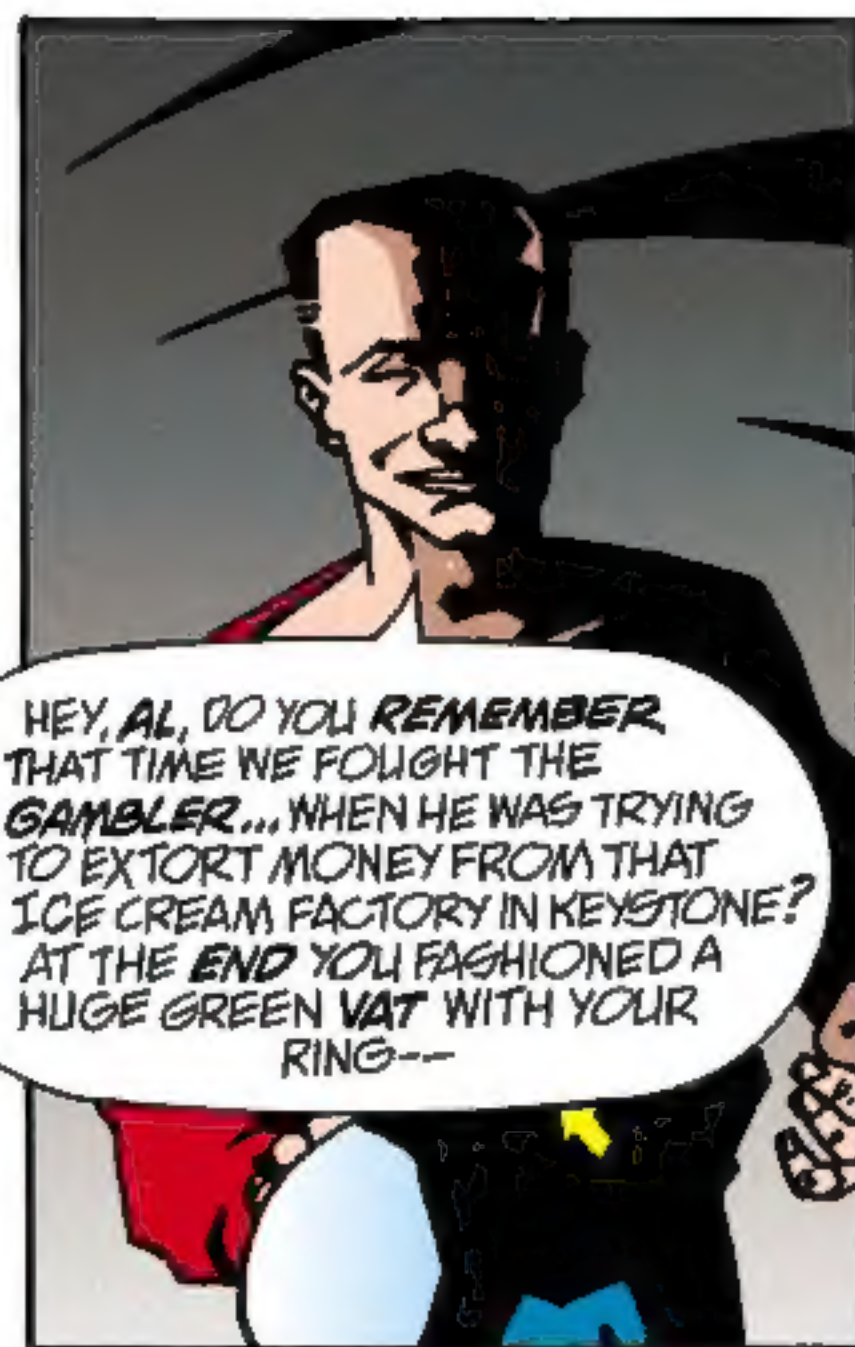
AND WE **THREE** **FIND** **RAGDOLL**?

AGREED.



IT'S **FUNNY** THE **AMOUNT OF TIMES** I **FOUGHT** HIM. NOT **ONCE** DID I **EVER** **FEEL** IN **DANGER**. AND **NOW**--

THE **WORLD** IS **CHANGING**, **JAY**. THE **FOES** WE **FOUGHT** HAVE **CHANGED**... FOR THE **WORSE**, MOST OF THEM.



SO WE HAVE
THE *NIGHT*.
TO ACCOMPLISH
MUCH.

IN THE *MORNING*...
IF ALL GOES WELL...
WE'LL MEET AGAIN.

AND REMEMBER
THE PAST WITH
LIGHTER
HEARTS.

I WONDER WHAT
THEY THOUGHT.

THESE
MEN.

AS THEY
WENT
TO THEIR
FATES.



"I CAN."



"I WILL."



"I DARE."

"I SHALL."

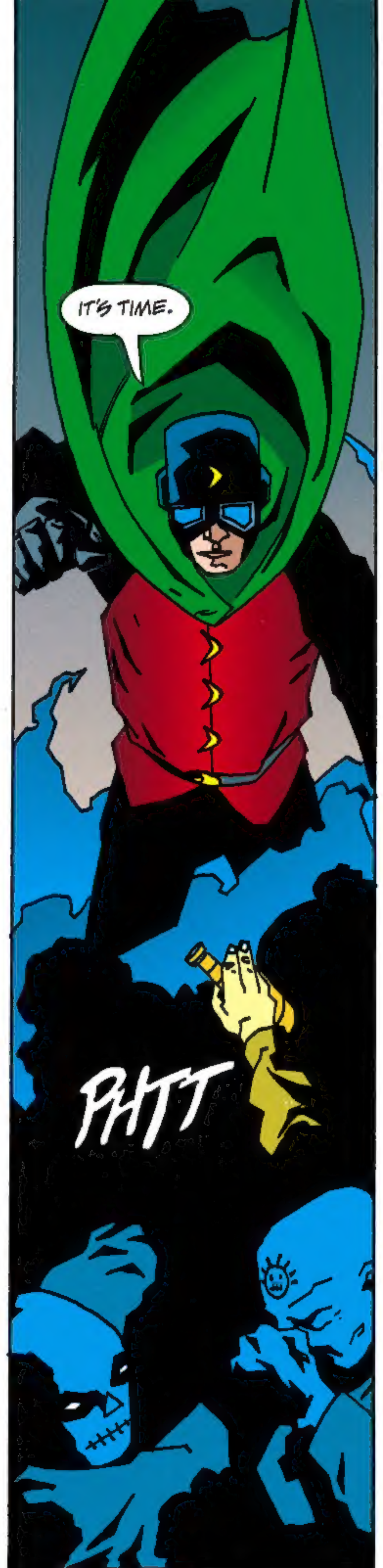
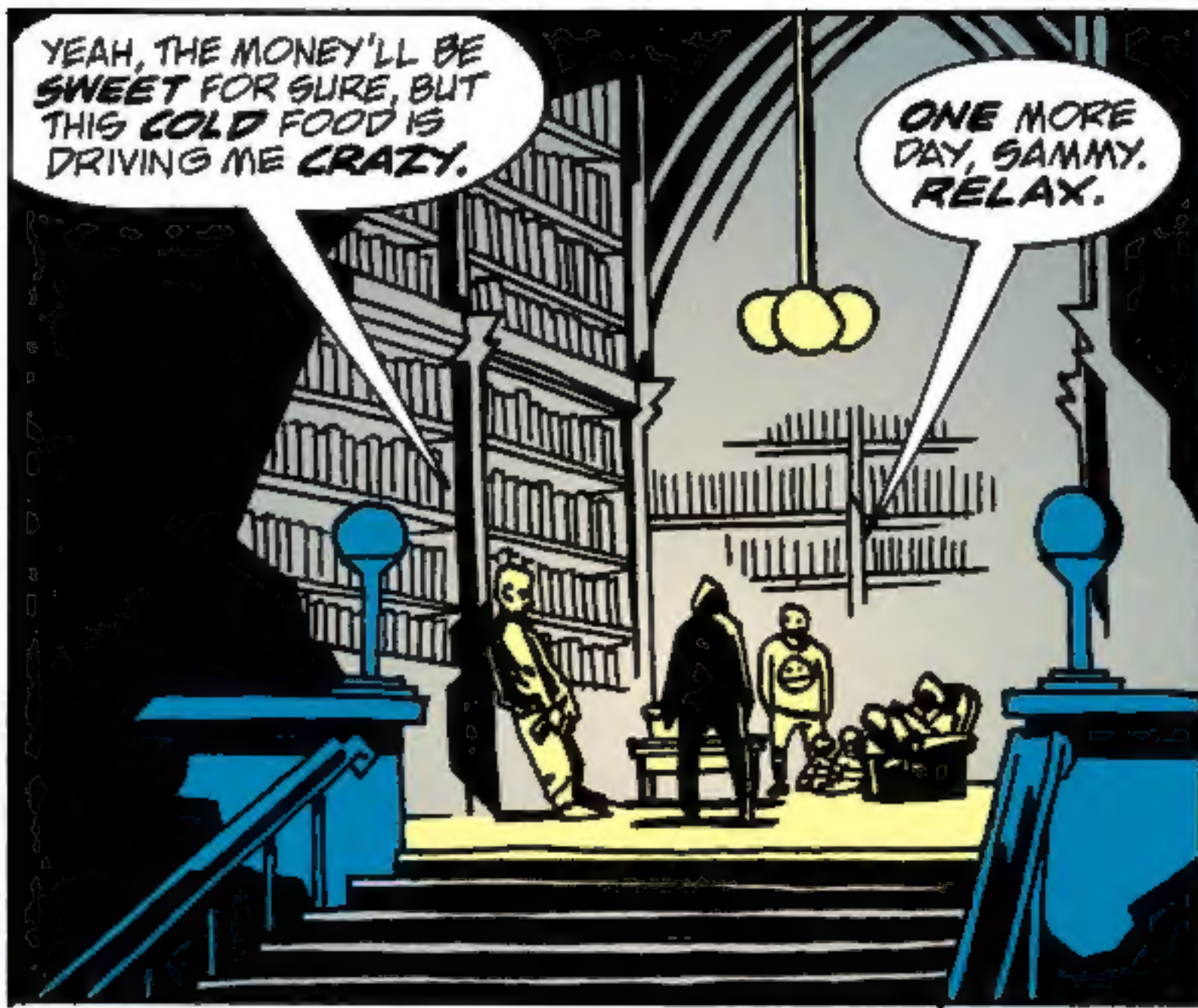


"I MUST."

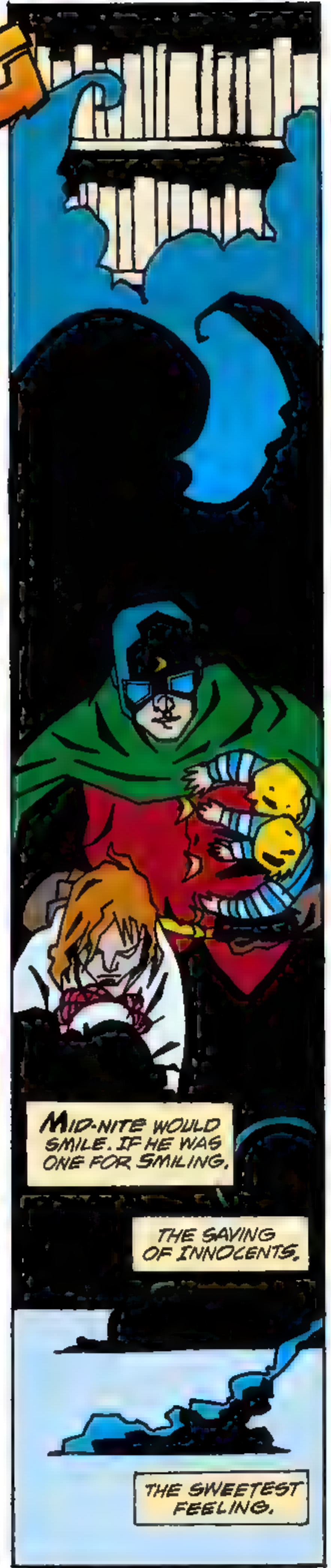


I WONDER
WHAT.





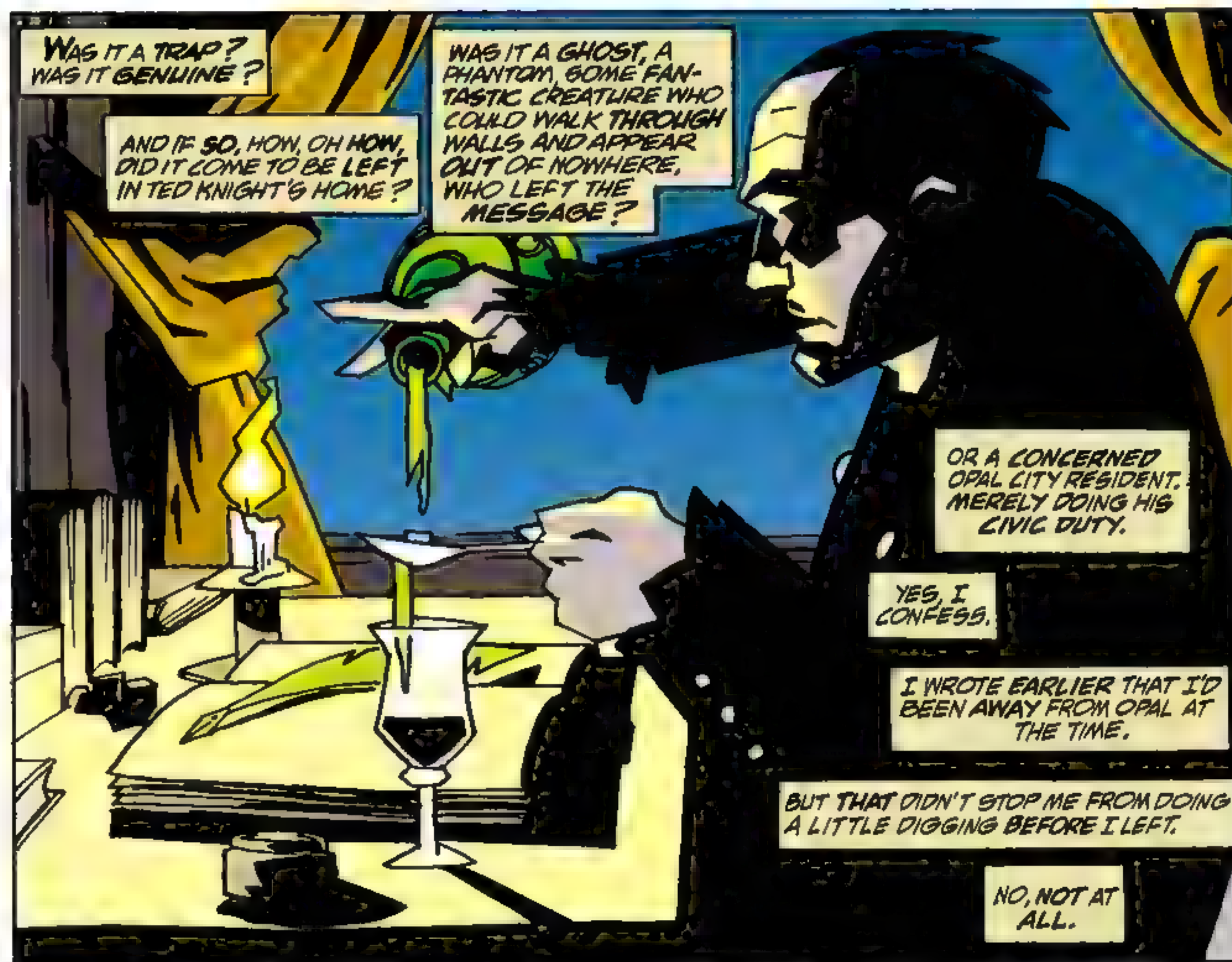
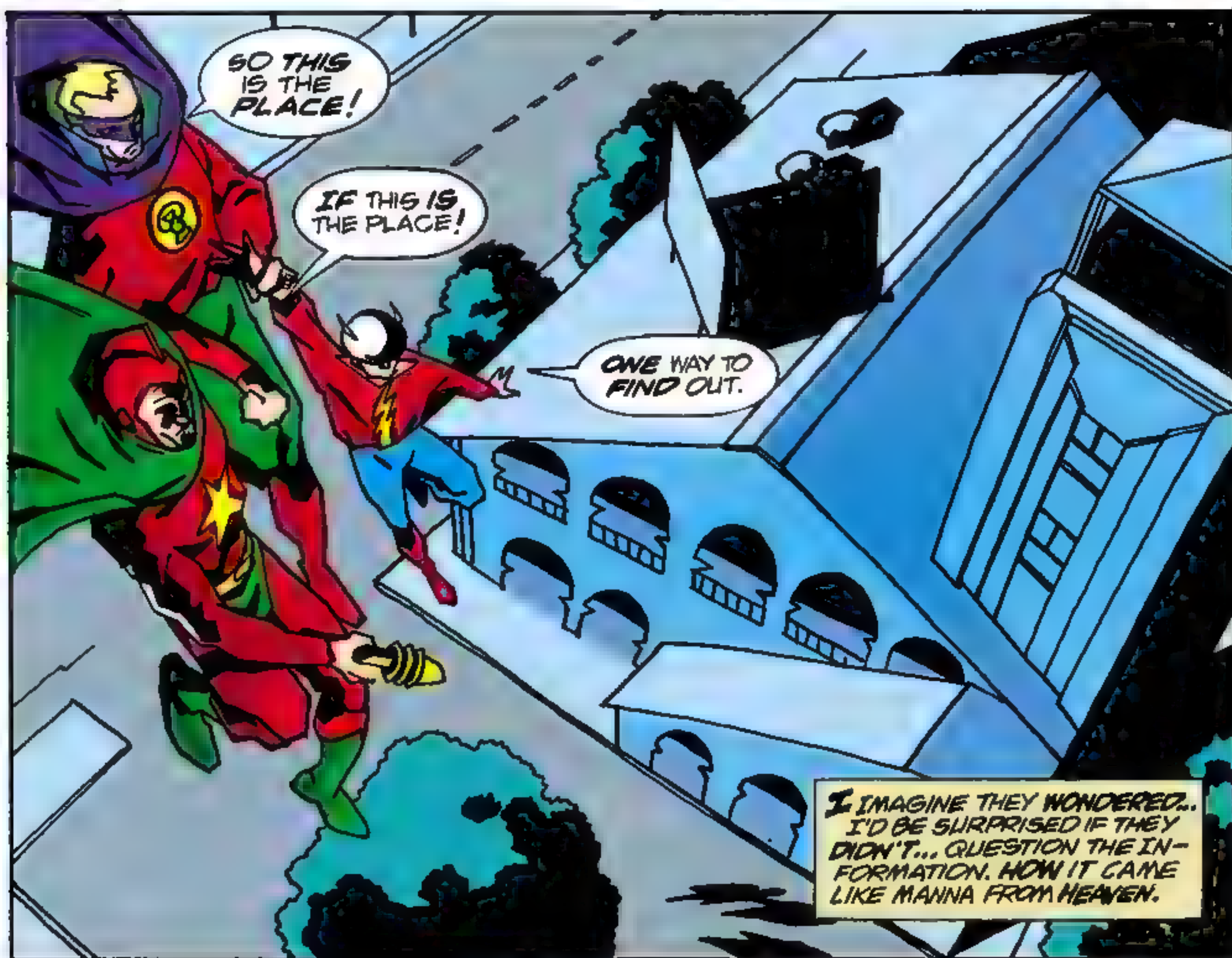


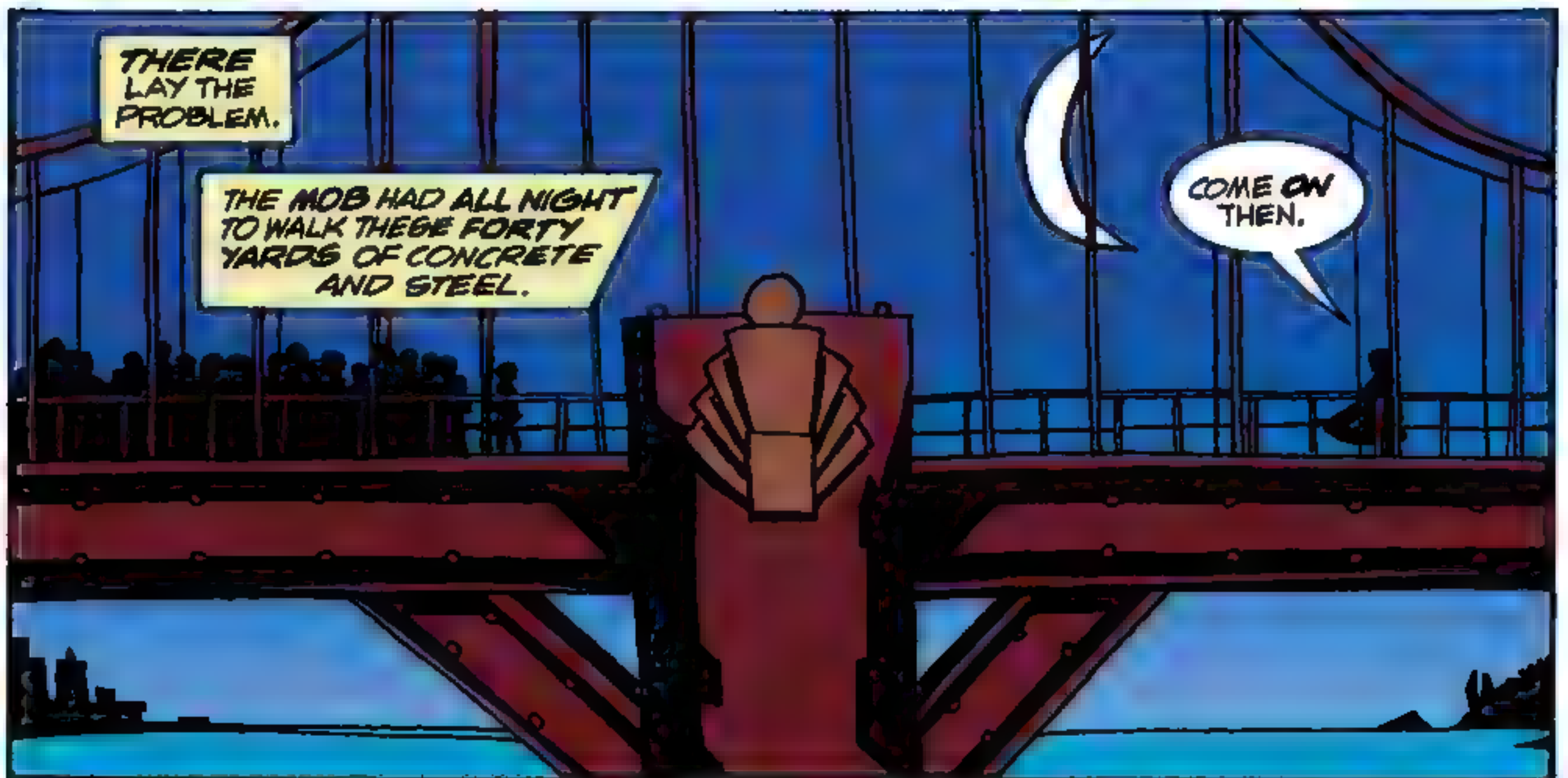
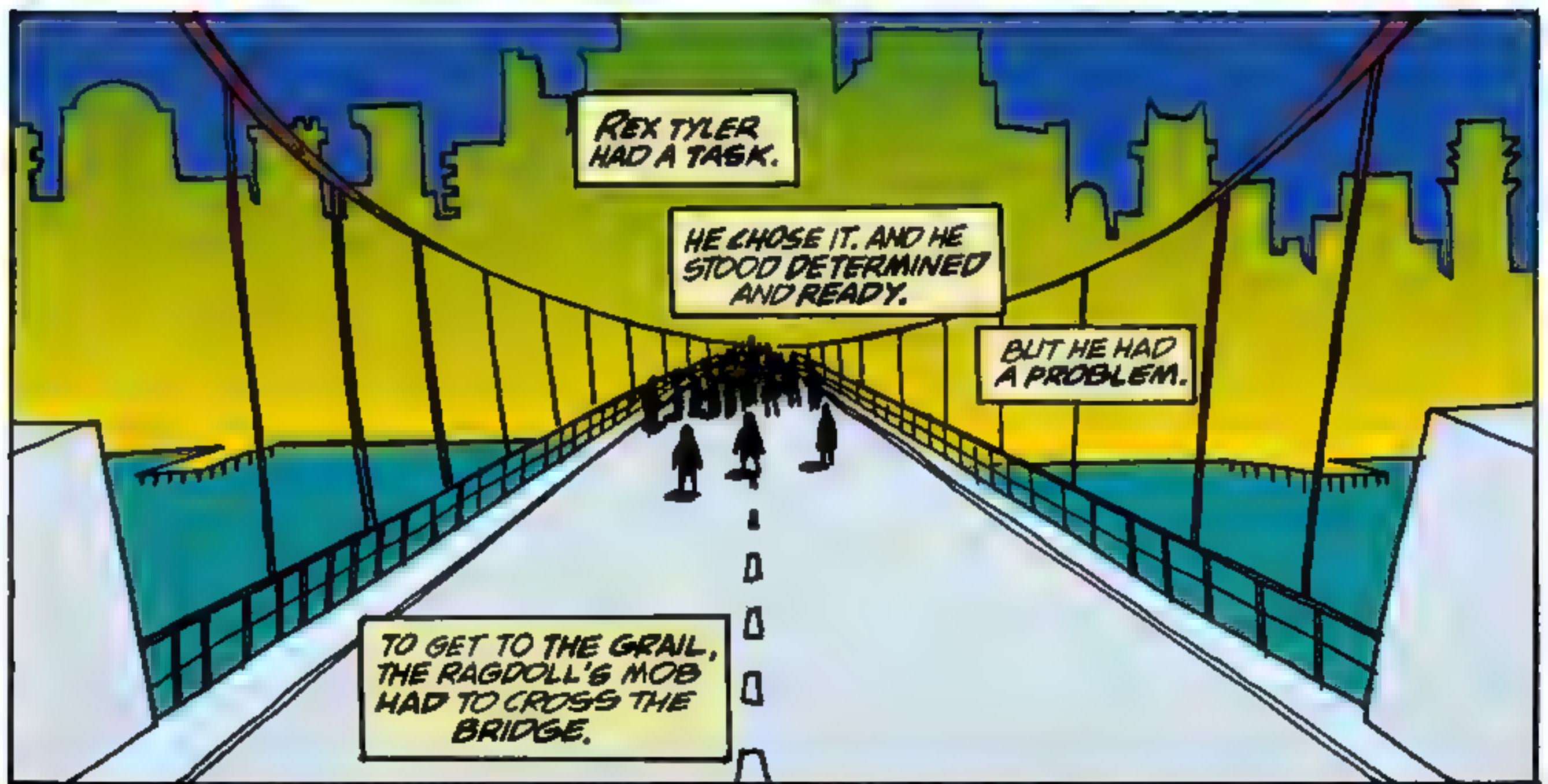


MID-NITE WOULD
SMILE. IF HE WAS
ONE FOR SMILING.

THE SAVING
OF INNOCENTS.

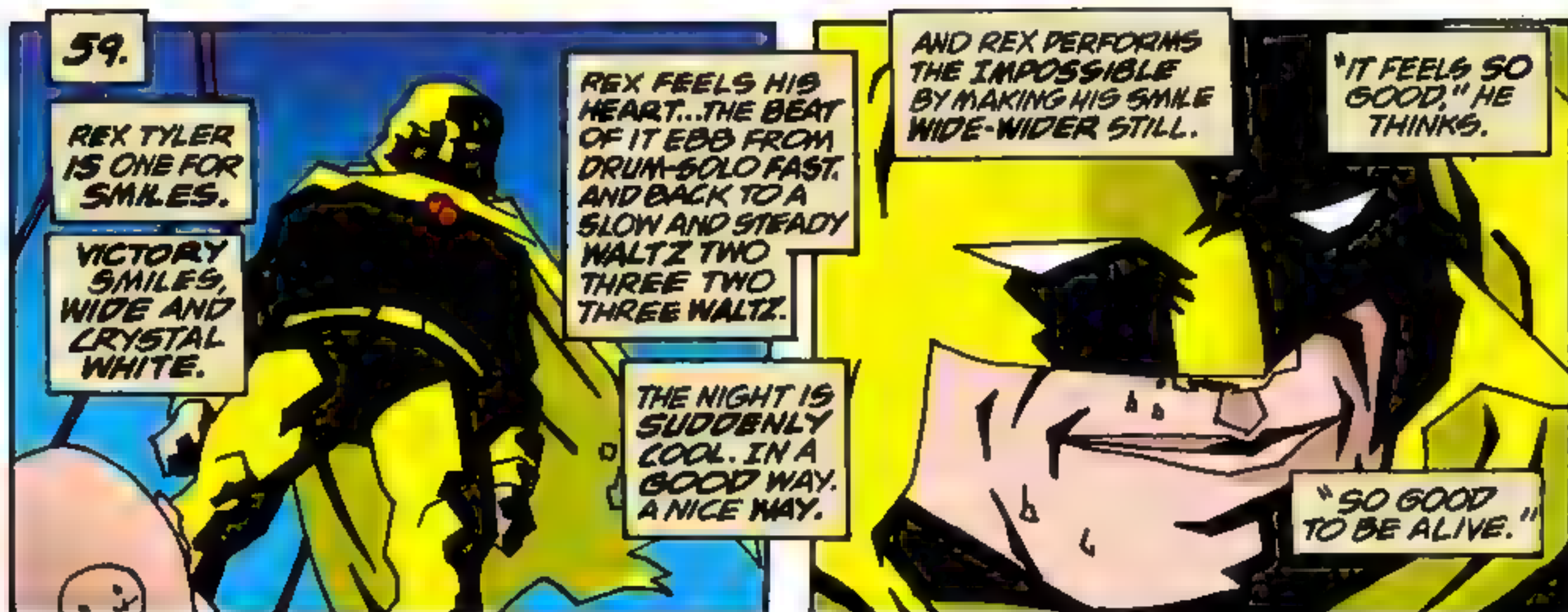
THE SWEETEST
FEELING.





12 MINUTES.

**27 MINUTES,
18 SECONDS.**



A GOD.

THAT'S HOW RASDOLL
THOUGHT HIMSELF,
CERTAINLY, BY THIS
POINT IN HIS ASCENT.

AND IN THESE DAYS OF SUPER
THIS AND THAT, AND EVERY-
THING AND ONE, THE WORD IS
USED OFTEN.

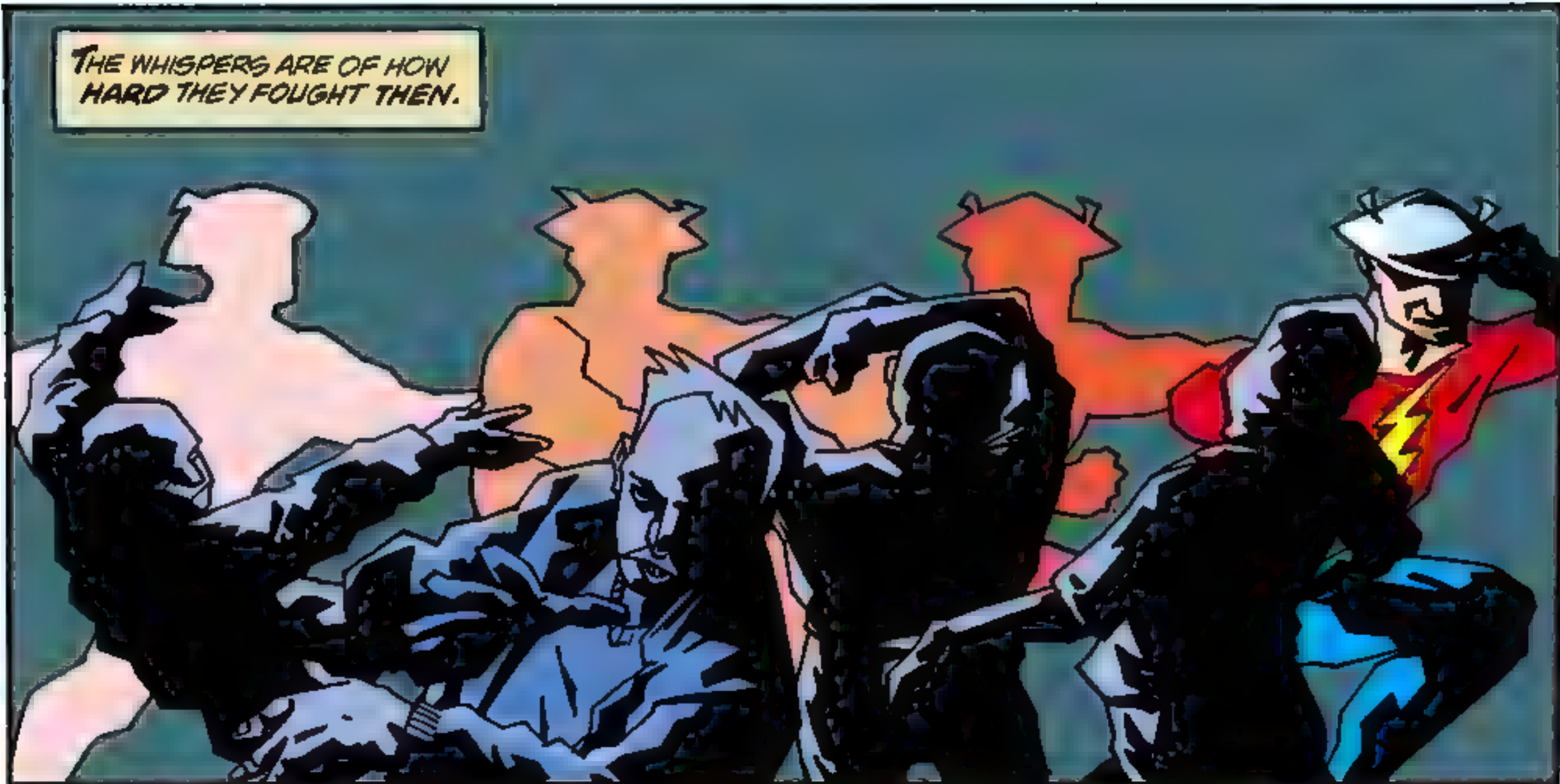
TOO OFTEN
IN MY
OPINION.

BUT THESE THREE
HEROES... THEY
CAME CLOSE, SURELY.

WITH THEIR DEEDS
AND THEIR HEARTS
AND THEIR HOPES.



THE WHISPERS ARE OF HOW
HARD THEY FOUGHT THEN.

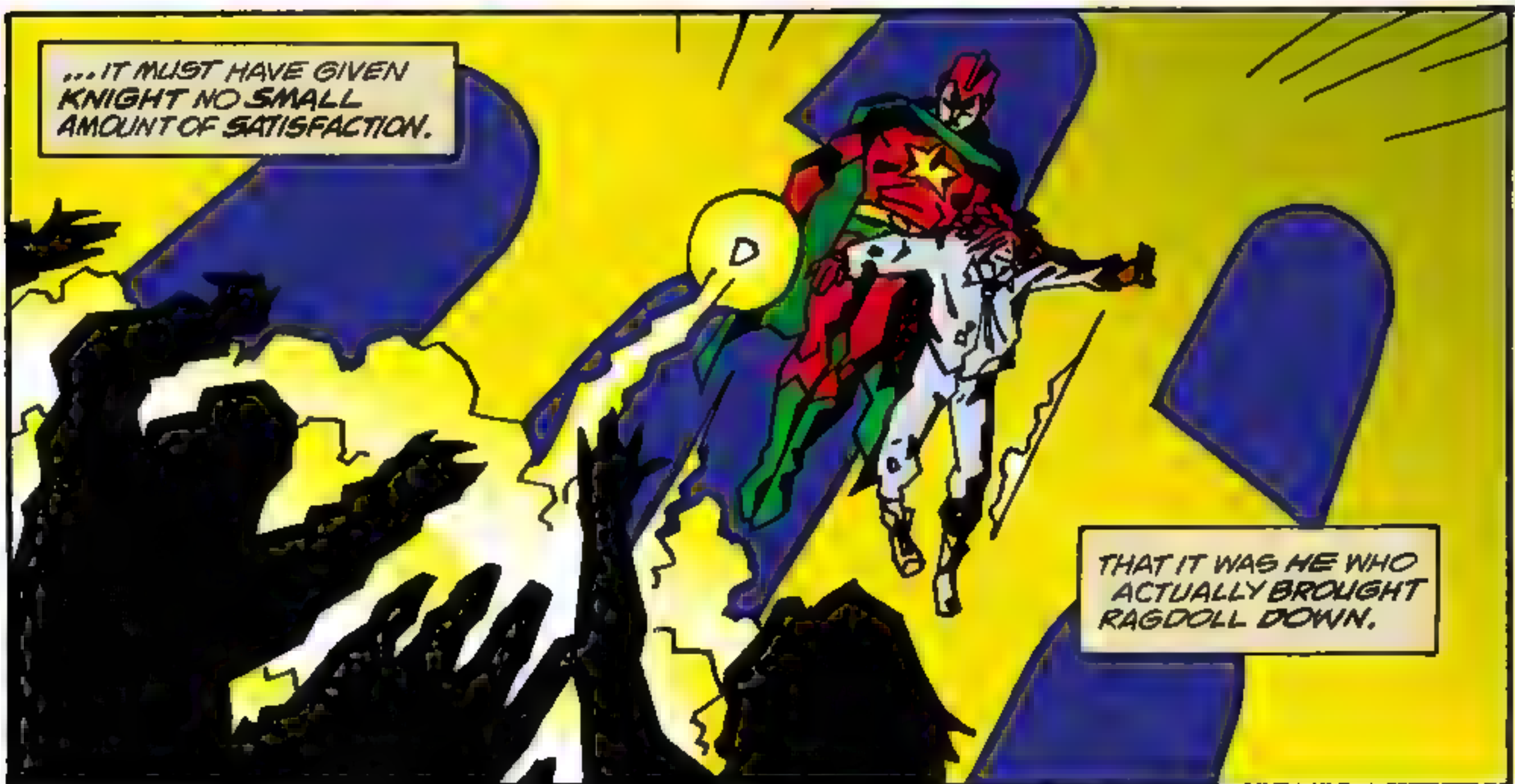


HARD AND
TRUE, ALL
THREE
OF THEM.

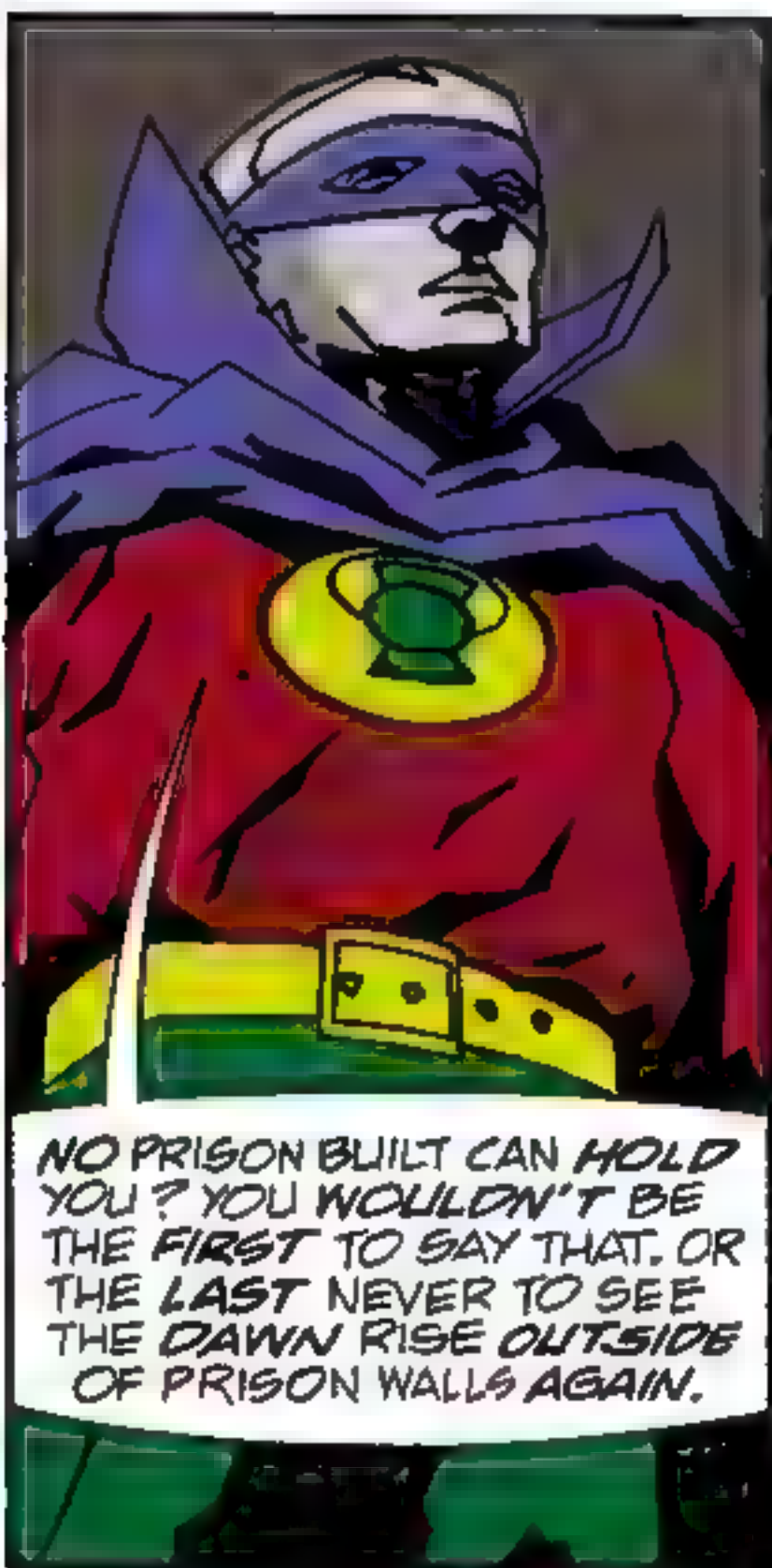
STILL ...



...IT MUST HAVE GIVEN
KNIGHT NO SMALL
AMOUNT OF SATISFACTION.



THAT IT WAS HE WHO
ACTUALLY BROUGHT
RAGDOLL DOWN.





The investigation that followed
of what happened next... wasn't
MUCH of an investigation.
The Ragdoll's tired joints
still had some of their old
DEXTERITY.
APPARENTLY.

FOR HE SLIPPED HIS BONDS
WITH THE EASE OF OLD.

AT WHICH POINT THE THREE
HEROES EXPERIENCED...



...A MOMENT OF
CONFUSION.



AND THEN THE RAGDOLL
LAY DEAD.

NO, IT WASN'T MUCH OF AN
INVESTIGATION. A MANIAC
DESERVED WHAT HE GOT.
THAT WAS THAT. CLOSE THE
FILE AND FORGET. OR SO
THE PAPERS AND THE PEOPLE
SAID.



THE RAGDOLL'S BODY WAS
STOLEN FROM THE MORGUE,
THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON.



The End.

Deadman Wade

"THIS IS WHAT
AWESOME
LOOKS LIKE".

DCP